



As Easter Approaches

Easter by Una A Stewart

*The joy of Easter comes to us slowly,
Rousing us from winter's death and cold,
Causing our eyes to lift and notice
Budding trees and nodding snowdrops,
Bearing us on wind and shower
To the sunshine bursting
Through our souls.
Can this age-old story rouse us
From depths of trouble, pain and sorrow,
To realise the promise of a future*

*Born from Gethsemane, Calvary and tomb?
Unlikely sources of such overflowing love,
Selfless and shining like a source of light
Piercing our souls.
Children, little heeding cross and shame,
Love the time of flowers and giving,
Know the happiness – so warming –
Of days of freedom, play and laughter,
Unaware of deeper meanings,
They shout and cry, fight and strive,
Bless their souls.*



As Easter approaches

This year, we have been hosting Wednesday evening services all through the season of Lent. Lent is, of course, that period of time during which Christians traditionally prepare for Easter – in the same way that Advent allows us to ready ourselves for Christmas.

These Lenten services will run right the way through to Holy Week; the week immediately before Easter weekend itself. They are being offered in the style of the Taizé Community in France, meaning that the emphasis is on repetitive chants and contemplation. Those who have been attending have been finding the services to be thoroughly peaceful – often just what's needed in a busy world.

Even if you haven't been part of these services until now, why not come along and join in for the final run in to Easter? You'd be made most welcome.

As Easter approaches

We are saying a fond farewell to Stuart, Lynne, Douglas and Gregor. Stuart has had a big impact on the life and work of St Andrew's and we will be forever indebted to him and Lynne. Martin pays tribute in his letter on page 3 - to which we all add our own grateful thanks and very best wishes for their future in Edinburgh.



As Easter approaches

This year, our Holiday Club is entitled Guardians of Ancora – the latest from the Scripture Union production line. It will include all

of the bits and pieces that the children have come to love but alongside these perennial favourites, Guardians of Ancora has some brand new features which we're sure will go down a storm with this year's club members!

As always, the club is open to all primary age children and at only £2.50 for the whole week it represents great value for money. This year, we commence on Easter Monday, 28th March and run every morning of that week, from 10am till

12noon. Registration opens two weeks before the start of the club but the main registration takes place on Saturday 26th March, from 10am till 12noon in our halls.

You can help!

- Make sure that lots of children know about the club – your own children, your grandchildren or the neighbour's kids
- Save empty tubs of Pringles
- Make a donation to help off-set the cost of the club, ensuring that we make it possible for all children to come with none excluded on grounds of expense
- And, of course, you can pray – for lots of children to come, for a strong team of volunteers and that the club would allow us contact with lots of new families who as yet have little or no contact with our church.

CHURCH OFFICE : 431135

ADMINISTRATOR

Linda Hunter

Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri : 9 -12noon

MINISTER

Rev Dr W Martin Fair, BA, BD

SESSION CLERK

Jane Miller : 875235

TREASURER

Susan Godsall : 430862

FREEWILL ENVELOPES

Iain Robertson : 877519

CHURCH OFFICER

Janis Clark : 878594

YOUTH WORKER

Adele Marr : 07762 740 317

HAVILAH PROJECT

LEADER

Tracey McLeod : 434088

**HAVILAH SUPPORT
WORKER**

Karen Reaney : 434088

ORGANIST

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FABRIC CONVENOR

Ray Reaney : 07803 235418

SUNDAY CLUB

Elaine Fair : 873238

SAFEGUARDING

Eleanor Mands : 01382 477318

FLOWER CONVENOR

Margaret McIntosh : 876993

PRAYER PROMOTERS

Judy Spink : 872395

Anne Matthew : 876008

SUPPLIES CO-ORDINATOR

Janis Clark : 878594

BOOKINGS / ROLLKEEPER

Linda Hunter : 431135

MAGAZINE EDITOR

Ken Miller : 875235

ST ANDREW'S ARBROATH

Parish Records

February 2016

Baptisms and Blessings - James Logan, son of
Amanda & Neil

Weddings - None

Funerals - None

Look Out For The Scammers!

- NEVER respond to an email that says your bank account has been compromised/closed and that you must sign in by clicking on a link that they provide.
- NEVER give bank account details or PIN numbers to anybody on the phone **NO MATTER WHO THEY CLAIM TO BE.**
- Sometimes they tell you to put the phone down and dial your bank - **DO NOT DO SO.** (The criminal does not put his phone down and then, when you dial, they create a fake tone/ring and you end up speaking to them again.)

IMPORTANT DATES

APRIL EDITION

Handwritten articles should be handed in to the office by the first date and not to the Editor.

Word Processed files, as attachments, can be sent directly to the Editor or via office by second date.

Please avoid embedding articles in an email as these then need additional formatting work.

Friday 18th March (Written/preferably typed)

Tuesday 22nd March (Word-Processed file)

**Service Core Group
ECO TIPS**

Try having short showers to save water. According to BBC's water saving tips, a 5 minute shower every day instead of a bath will save 400 litres of water a week.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Organisations will alert members when groups resume after holidays or when changes to venues are made.

SUNDAY

10.15 am – Gathering for prayer.

10.30 am – Choir practice.

11.00 am – Morning service (with short communion on the third Sunday of each month. Tea/coffee after. Creche – up to age 3. Infants – ages 3 to 5. Juniors – ages 8 and 9. Seniors – ages 10 and 11
Sunday Club – Elaine Fair (873238). Teen Scene – S1 to S2

7.30 to 9.00 pm – Youth Group

Monday to Friday - 12.00 – Havilah : Drop-in Centre – Community Spirit (434088)

MONDAY

2.00 pm – Dorothy Dobson Over 50s Exercise Class

6.00 pm – Rainbow Guides – L Hadden (875379)

7.30 pm – St Andrew's Guild : Fortnightly – Shona Kemp (878526)

7.30 pm – Flower Club : Fortnightly – M McIntosh (876993)

WEDNESDAY

10.30 am – Midweek Meeting Point – M Fair (873238)

6.15 pm – Brownies – Rosie Hill (07977 790528)

7.30 pm – Guides - Rosie Hill (07977 790528)

THURSDAY

10.00 am – Parent and Toddler Group – M Laidlaw (07840 966438)

2.00 pm – Friends Club : first Thursdays – N Watson – B Gerrard, secretary (552727)

6.00 pm – Anchor Boys – S Jamieson (431942)

6.00 pm – BB Junior Section – W Ewart (876114)

7.30 pm – BB Company Section – M Clark (437758)

FRIDAY

9.30 am – Coffee morning

Intimations, changes of address, hall bookings etc., please contact the Church office, Monday to Friday, 9 am to noon and for 15 minutes after Sunday Service, telephone 431135.

Martin Fair

March 2016

Dear Friends,

On the 17th of February, Stuart and I went out for lunch together – simple food and friendship is always hard to beat. Halfway through our lunch, it suddenly struck me that Stuart's time with us is virtually over – and will be by the time you read this. Of course we've known for long enough that Stuart would go on to lead his own congregation. But there was just something in that moment, over lunch, when it came home to me. And my principal thought was this; 'I'm going to miss him.'

What a joy it has been for us to have Stuart and Lynne as part of our congregation – and then to see Douglas growing up in our midst and Gregor being born just this Christmas. It has felt as if they've always been a part of our family and so it's going to take some getting used to that they're not around anymore. And what a joy it's been for me personally to have a colleague to share ministry and friendship with.

But our loss is the wider church's gain. Again, by the time you read this, it should be clear where Stuart is going to be ministering and that church is going to be getting a fine young minister. He will go there with our best wishes. When the time for his induction comes around it will be our intention to run a bus so that as many of us as possible can share in the celebration with Stuart's family and friends and new congregation. And of course Stuart and Lynne and the boys aren't emigrating to the other side of the world so we'll be able to keep up with them and learn of how things are going. At the very least we'll go on praying for them, that God will use them richly in the building of his Kingdom.

As for us, life will go on. Adele, our Youth Worker, will shortly be taking on more hours and that will in part compensate for Stuart's absence in our school and children's work. And further to that, the Leadership Group will be working with our Finance Group at how best to provide locum support for myself – again, to take up some of the slack. We've been so richly blessed in having a full-time Associate for these last three years but it was never going to last – there are too many churches with no minister for us to go on indefinitely with two! Even so, with your support of our November Gift Day, we'll be able to go some way to ensuring the continuation of the ministry and mission of the congregation as effectively as possible.

So as this chapter of our story comes to an end, we are full of thanksgiving for what has been. And as always before, we will trust God for all that lies ahead.

With every blessing,

Martin and Elaine and family (inc. Flossie!)

mfair@churchofscotland.org.uk

Farewell and Thank You

Alas, this will be the last article I write as associate minister. Hopefully, if the editor will oblige, I will still be able to make a contribution from time to time and maybe even the odd picture of the boys!

As I write this I am now in my final week – hasn't the time flown in? Perhaps you will have heard from me in person that I have accepted an invitation to preach as sole nominee at St Catherine's Argyle, Edinburgh. I am really excited for a new start. However, as you might imagine, this is tinged with a hint of sadness as I get ready to say farewell to St Andrew's Church and Arbroath.

As I look to the new challenges ahead and to all the new people that I will meet, I of course look with fondness on all that I have been a part of here. So too, I think of all the

people that I have got to know as they have made me, Lynne and the boys feel so welcome.

When I was clearing out my (rather messy) drawers in the McLeod room I came across all the cards that I had kept from my Ordination. It was quite a night, was it not, with St Andrew's hospitality in full swing? These cards I will be keeping as an encouragement, but more so all the kind words and support that people have shown remind me more and more that I am going with the blessing and good will of you kind people.

So what is left to say other than thanks for making our time here so special and of course – come and visit if you're ever in Auld Reekie!

Yours in Christ,

Stuart

Annual Stated Meeting

The Annual meeting of the congregation is to take place immediately after worship on Sunday 13th March and as many members and friends of the congregation as possible are asked to attend.

With the change in constitution adopted several years ago and with OSCAR regulations in force, these meetings

have changed somewhat over the years. They do not now involve the election of office bearers and neither does the congregation have to approve the accounts – that is done by the Kirk Session, the member of which are the trustees.

Even so, it's a meeting at which members of the congregation can hear for themselves how we've done financially in the previous year and of our plans for the future. With that in mind, your attendance is greatly appreciated.

Ask Theophilus

Question :

The story of the tower of Babel in Genesis 6:1-9: Come let us build a city with its top in the heavens... Is this fact or fiction, myth or metaphor?

Theophilus answers :

Over the past 150 years, much research has been done by archaeologists in ancient 'ziggurats', towers in eight sections, each section being slightly smaller in diameter than the one on which it stood. At the very top was always a temple.

Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nabopolassar, founded a vast empire and was determined to build a great tower in the centre of his capital city, Babylon. He was following the example of a much earlier dictator, Gilgamesh, whose story is told in possibly the world's oldest piece of literature, The Epic of Gilgamesh, written on clay tablets about 4,500BC. This king of a city called Uruk had travelled the known world searching for the secret of immortality, so that he might himself become a god. But having failed in his quest, he resolved to build a tower so high that it would be seen for scores of miles around; it was a circular step-pyramid, reaching possibly a height of five to six hundred feet, with a

network of external stairways. His intention was that his mighty tower would make him immortal. Tens of thousands of workers from all over the entire middle-east were forced into the building work (see Genesis 11:6).

Nabopolassar had the same plan, but he only managed the foundations of his ziggurat intended to win him immortality. His son Nebuchadnezzar completed the structure many years later. A full account of its building is preserved in ancient clay tablets. The outside bricks were glazed blue, and formed images of the tyrant. Saddam Hussein restored the first tier of the tower Nebuchadnezzar built, but not with beautiful glazed bricks, only with rough cast cement! Today it is called the Ziggurat of Ur, and can be seen about 10 miles south of Baghdad.

However, the foundations of the tower which is referred to in Genesis 11 have possibly been located about twenty miles south of Baghdad. They are reckoned to be some 5000 years old, and speculation is that they may be remains of the ziggurat of Gilgamesh. My guess is that this could be the tower to which the Bible passage is referring. (For further reading - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ziggurat_of_Ur Also, look at the website for Bruegel the Elder/Tower, the 16th century Dutch painter; people in the 16th century were fascinated by the story in Genesis 11.) (See pictures on back page - Ed.)

Youth Work Update

Youth Group

The Youth group are currently getting excited for our visit to Teen Ranch in a few weeks. On behalf of the young people who have been sponsored by you, the congregation, thank you very much for your kindness and generosity. By helping our young people in this way I can guarantee they will have a fantastic weekend taking part in sports and games, and, importantly, hearing God's word.

Refresh

Our work at the Academy, giving out drinks to pupils at lunchtime, is going well with many of the young people chatting to us each week. We have discovered they enjoy fruit cocktails much more than they liked hot chocolate which came as a surprise to me!

The Drop-In

As of 27th February, Matthew, Chris and Amy are taking on a new venture in the form of The Drop-In. This will be exactly what it says on the tin: a drop-in, held at Community Spirit, on Saturdays from 7pm-9pm. It is aimed at S1-4 pupils from anywhere in the town, although we will be advertising in the Academy. This endeavour comes out of discussions with pupils at Refresh and the innovation of our Vocations Volunteers who feel this will address a need for a safe space for young people at the weekend. Community Spirit is a great base for this as it has a pool table, dart board, comfy sofas and is in our parish. Your prayers are very much appreciated for this new project, and please let people know about it!

Blessings,

Adele (Marr!)

GUILD NEWS

While sitting writing this article, the sun is shining and it is a beautiful day - one of those days when you begin to think about spring and summer until you go outside and realise that it is still very cold and only a few degrees above freezing! Our last guild night was one of these meetings that puts a smile on your face too. We had the Gallus Boys entertaining us and they certainly did that well. Dave and Lawrie (our own church members) sang a great variety of songs, played the guitar and wash board, announcing each song in their own amusing and interesting way. Hopefully, a night we can repeat in the future for those who were unfortunate and missed the boys this time round.

We always try to have a varied programme of meetings.

In March we have a speaker from one of the Guild Projects and then we are seeing and perhaps trying Tai-Chi!! At our first meeting in April we will hear about Persecuted Christians throughout the world. Please come along if any of these appeal.

We will also be working towards a coffee morning we are holding in April. Money raised will go towards our Guild Projects etc. Please come along and support us if you can.

Lastly it is that time of year again when the Guild collects and counts the church boxes. Could you please look them out and return them to the church by Sunday, 13th of March.

Guild Motto: "Whose we are and whom we serve"

Malawi – Onwards and Upwards

As we waved goodbye to the first group of our teenagers as they set off for Malawi back in 2007, who among us could have known how things would grow and flourish in the years that followed? But that's exactly what has happened. Two orphan centres have been built, hundreds of Malawian children are being cared for on a daily basis, with the provision of education, food and water and medical care at a level that otherwise would be beyond all of them. In short, we have – and are – making a significant difference in the lives of some of the world's poorest and most fragile communities. None of us is in any doubt that this success is in large part due to the drive and commitment of both the Dunphy and Bowie families. With your wonderful giving, they have done everything to ensure that the work has thrived.

In many ways, that work in Malawi has now outgrown what ordinarily a single congregation might expect to do in terms of international mission. The work involved and the sums of money involved have grown to a level which could never have been envisaged in earlier years. It has increasingly become an issue for us as to just how to handle the project in relation to the rest of the congregation's work.

With all of that in mind, and following much discussion and careful, prayerful deliberation, the Kirk Session – in agreement with those who have been running the Malawi Group until now – has resolved to create a separate and independent trust to run the work from now on. Sheila and Fraser, Doris and Sandy, are even now working out the best way to bring such a trust into being. And, in the meantime, a small team of the congregation's office bearers has assumed responsibility for administering the project until such times as the new trust is founded.

This decision has been taken with the wellbeing of the Malawian children foremost in our minds. The Malawi project can continue to flourish as can the more day-to-day work of the congregation. Indeed it is hoped that the Malawi work being independent of St. Andrew's Church, in both administration and name, might allow for the trustees to garner support from a wider circle than has hitherto been the case.

How does this affect you?

Firstly, those of you who sponsor children will still be able to do so. The only difference will be that your monthly gift will be handled by the new trust rather than by the congregation. To allow for that change, at an appropriate time we will be writing to all sponsors seeking your permission for the handing over of your details to the new trust. (This is an administrative detail but a necessary one in this age of data protection.) Thereafter the new trust will seek your support as an ongoing sponsor. We are entirely hopeful that all sponsors will choose to continue to support their children, and would encourage you to do so. Your money will be administered by a new body but it will be used to achieve the same things – and that's the most important thing.

Similarly, in the future the new trust – as opposed to the congregation – will hold fund-raising events and you will be able to support these as you see fit.

So, here we are at an important stage in the life of our work in Malawi. That we have got to this stage is nothing short of miraculous. With God's help, the work will continue as effectively under these new arrangements.

As things develop from here, we will of course keep you all informed as required.

7th Arbroath B.B.

Our weekly meetings on a Thursday night have been most encouraging. We have 3 new boys in the Anchor section and at present we cannot take any more. The Anchor and Junior section met with the people who had an event in the church about the redevelopment of Arbroath and the boys had a great time finding places in the town on the large floor map. We took a mid-term break along with school break and we now have 6 weeks until the Easter holidays to get all our activities for badge work finished. At

Christmas two Junior section boys gained their Target Badge- Ben Garden and Daniel Webster.

We have two Company Boys, Josh Gall and Fraser Fair working towards gaining the Presidents Badge this year and they have a full day of activities to attend on 20th March.

Our Fund Raiser this year is a Quiz night on Friday 18th of March in the church hall at 7pm. Teams of four cost £10. We will also have a bring and buy stall etc.

Captain W.H.Ewart.

The Charrette

Angus Council has been going from town to town across the county running 'Charrette' events, the most recent of which focussed on Arbroath and was held in our own church. The Council had put together a team of architects, town planners and business and social consultants whose job it was to listen to members of the public, hearing their views about our town and their aspirations concerning ways in which the town centre might be improved.

The results of this consultation exercise will be made public in due course but we should be delighted that the event took place in St. Andrew's Church. It's another example of how our refurbishment programme (completed in 2009) has made it possible for us to welcome lots more people and events into our buildings.

If you go back in time, churches were very definitely at the centre of their communities. In more recent times, the opposite has largely become the case with churches becoming more and more peripheral to the life of the communities in which they are set. We're determined to reverse that trend and to put St. Andrew's where it should be – at the centre of the life of our town.

As always when we host such events, a big 'thank you' is due to all of our people who make it possible – Linda in our office and all of the volunteers who help with moving chairs and tables, providing food and refreshments and making sure that everyone is made welcome. Without our team, none of this would be possible. With them, we're able to present our church as the vibrant, welcoming place that it truly is.

Heart & Soul

As in the last three years, we will be running a bus to the Church of Scotland's annual 'Heart & Soul' event. It takes place in Princes Street gardens, Edinburgh, from 1-6pm on Sunday 22nd May. To allow for a

timely departure, our morning service on that day will commence at 10.30am.

Bookings for the bus can be made at the Church Office anytime from the beginning of April.

Visit www.heartandsoul.org.uk for full details.

Atlanta NEXT Conference

Our minister has recently returned from attending a conference of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America which was held in Atlanta, Georgia. Martin was part of a small Church of Scotland team which had been invited to attend the conference and to lead a session for over six hundred delegates who attended.

The fact is that Scotland has, in the last generation, seen huge changes taking place, culturally, socially and economically. Part of this change has been the dramatic secularisation process that we've seen taking place all around us and the resultant 'crash' in terms of the place of the Church. At the end of the 1960s there were around 1.5 million members of the Church of Scotland. Today, there are around 350,000. Far less people are baptised into the faith, far less couples opt for a Christian wedding and, as we've seen more recently, fewer and fewer

people are choosing a Christian funeral service.

Against that backdrop, we're having to learn all over again how to engage our community and wider world – a world that largely has no interest in us or our message.

The situation in America is quite different. Going to church is still the 'done thing' for many. Politicians can be up-front about their religious beliefs. To put it simply, it's still possible to talk of America as being a 'Christian country.' But the first chill winds are being felt – the beginning of processes that we in the UK felt many years ago.

It was to address those issues that the team from Scotland was asked to attend the conference. What can our American brothers and sisters learn from our experience? What can we share with them about being the church in a rampantly secular society? Perhaps insights from Scotland will enable them to be well prepared for what the coming years are likely to bring.

Visit from Angus College

At the beginning of February, we received a call from Angus College asking if it would be possible for a group of students to visit the church. Of course, we were delighted to welcome them. The first hour of their visit took the form of a Question & Answer session, during which Martin, our minister, was bombarded with questions - everything from 'How do you know God exists?' to 'What do people get out of coming to church?' Hopefully Martin was able to offer them convincing answers – answers to get them thinking!

After the Q&A session, the students

joined us for our Wednesday service and stayed afterwards for coffee and cake. During that coffee time, we were delighted to hear all of the students, and their teacher, enthusing about their experience of being among us. 'What a wonderful welcome we've been given!' and 'What a lovely sense of community and belonging' were the most common comments.

And that's the way it should be! That's what everyone who comes to St. Andrew's should experience – whether 'one-off' visitors or people looking for a church to belong to. Well done to the Wednesday service crowd for making it work for our student friends!

New Members

By the time you're reading this edition of QUEST we'll have welcomed a number of new members to the congregation. The Service of Admission to Membership took place on Sunday 3rd March.

It's always a thrill to see new people wanting to become members of our family, whether they are young people or older. It's not just that an increase in our numbers is welcome, though it certainly is. But more than that, we look forward to what our new members will bring to the congregation.

Everyone has a set of gifts and talents, passions and experiences and all of that will go into the mix of what we have as a congregation.

When you get an opportunity, make sure that you offer a personal welcome to our new members.

LOOKING AHEAD

MARCH

Sunday 6

9.30 am - Traditional Worship
11 am - Welcome of new members and Service of Communion;
Week 18 of E100
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

Sunday 13

11 am - Worship Service
Week 19 of E100
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

Sunday 20

11 am - Palm Sunday Worship Service
Week 20 of E100
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

Sunday 27th

8 am - Early-morning Easter Service (at Arbroath Abbey)
11 am - Easter Celebration for all the family, with Communion for all
6.30 pm - Evening Worship (Note—NO Messy Church)

APRIL

Sunday 3

9.30 am - Traditional Worship
11 am - Worship Service, including Service of Infant Baptism
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

Sunday 10

11 am - Worship Service
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

Sunday 17

11 am - Worship Service
Week 16 of E100
Main service followed by short celebration of Communion
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

Sunday 24

11 am - Worship Service
4pm - Messy Church
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

N.B. As well as the services above there is a 40 minute service every Wednesday morning at 10.30 am.

MALAWI UPDATE

The weather has been terrible this year again. The rains have been even worse than last year. There has been very sporadic rainfall followed by long periods of very dry weather. This has meant that the maize has grown very poorly. Many of the stalks are thin, small and have very small ears of corn. The situation throughout Malawi is now reaching crisis point as last year there was not enough maize grown in the whole country to supply everyone's need. This has led to the huge over inflation of prices of maize beyond the usual hunger season prices. Without the prospect of a good harvest this year, this is very worrying. Each of our centres is very busy at the moment, involved in distributing maize. There are lots of villagers coming every day asking for maize and everyday there are more and more children arriving at the centre asking to be taken in. Unfortunately, we only have a certain capacity and our priority has to be to the children we already care for and the very neediest of the others that we find.

You may have read in the press recently that the food situation in Malawi is the worst it has been in 10 years, with many children being severely malnourished. We have heard of several charities who have begun focusing their efforts solely on tackling the malnourishment problem because it is so bad. These reports have stated that 42% of children in Malawi are stunted, 21% are considered underweight and 4% are considered medically wasted. It was also noted that 23% of child deaths in Malawi are associated with under nutrition. Official figures from the Malawian government are estimating that 2.8million people are currently going hungry in Malawi, however many NGOs believe that the actual figures are much higher.

With so many of the surrounding villagers going hungry and having no way of providing for their families, the demand on our food relief service is completely outweighing our supply of food. Unicef have been working very hard over the last few years in nutrition rehabilitation units. These are medical centres where the acutely malnourished children can go to be fed via therapeutic drip feeds until they are healthy enough to go home. Admissions in one of these centres was monitored – In October 2014 they had 57 admissions, January 2015- 174 (Harvest is in March/ April so the worst hunger time is leading up to harvest). Compare that to this year where they had 152 admissions in October 2015 and 263 admissions in January 2016. These are some of the poorest children for whom starvation really is a reality.

One such needy child was found by social welfare at Thyolo recently. She has no direct family and was very malnourished. When social welfare found her they brought her to our centre where she has now become a boarder. This girl is 12 years old and is called Maria John. She is from a village a few miles away. She is now enrolled in standard 4 at Nachipere Primary School where many of the other children attend. She has already put on weight despite only being with us a few weeks and is reported to be looking

healthier already.

On another note, the container, which was sent in November, unfortunately due to bad weather and other unforeseen circumstances did not manage to get to Malawi in time for Christmas. It did manage to get there for the end of January and so the boxes were quickly divided up by our talented team and the children were able to enjoy a second Christmas celebration. You will see from the attached picture how excited the children were to get their backpacks and all the goodies inside.

The container contained lots of medical equipment which has been distributed between the clinics that Aquaid run, our own new hospital and the local hospitals that the Aquaid children use. Kiri, our very resourceful administrator, took some of the equipment to her local hospital – Thyolo district hospital and presented them to the ward sisters. She then asked for volunteers to come and give our children yearly check ups...- which has been agreed to!

At Kambilonjo preparations are well underway for the opening of our new clinic/ hospital (It has two medical bays - 8 beds in total). It is now looking very good and is awaiting government permission and for the government to send some employees. This is very exciting! We are looking forward to seeing it for ourselves in June when we visit Malawi.

The recent Malawian currency devaluation has compounded the financial problems of all Malawians. Currently a 50kg bag of maize is at a record high of MK20,000 which is the equivalent of £20. This will supply the carbohydrate part of a family of 3's meals for a month (they will still have to source vegetables and meat). We will be aiming to prioritise food relief this year as much as possible, in accordance with the advice of our Malawian staff. If anyone feels that they could or would like to support this venture, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

I read a quote from Shane Claiborne recently which stated that 'The greatest tragedy in the church today is not that rich Christians do not care about the poor, but that they do not know the poor'.

How true is this quote? Certainly for me, there are so many times I am moved with compassion, when I hear a story or watch comic relief or these programmes but that compassion is soon dissipated because I do not KNOW those people. Thank you for taking the opportunity through the Sponsored Child programme of getting to know at least one of our Malawian neighbours! Should you know of anyone else who would be interested in getting involved please ask them to get in touch.

Please continue to pray for the situation in Malawi and uplift each of our children and their families in prayer.

Many thanks for your continued support and may God continue to bless you for your generosity.

Becky



Karen McGavock

Though Karen only spent a few months with us, as part of her period of discernment, she made an immediate impact at St. Andrew's – not least in the quality and creativity of her prayers and

other contributions to our worship services. We are delighted now to announce that Karen passed her local review and is now free to go to Selection Conference. If she is successful there, she will be able to start training for the ministry in the autumn (perhaps alongside our own Tim Mineard!)

We wish Karen well in her present role and in all that lies ahead as she seeks the confirmation of the Church on her sense of call.



Left - Images for the 'Ask Theophilus' article. Above - The Malawi children receive their gifts. Right - Adele Ramsay and Michael Marr wedding. Below - Now this is why it is called - **MESSY CHURCH!**



Good fun!



Even better!



Ehhh ... excuse me, but what now!

